



Minutes for Town of Pawlet Planning Commission
Pawlet Town Office
Pawlet, VT
Monday, April 27, 2015
7:30 p.m.

Members in Attendance:

Wayne Clarke
Lenny Gibson
Eric Mach
Fred Stone
Harry Van Meter

Members Absent:

Gary Baierlein

Others in Attendance:

Barbara Noyes Pulling, Rutland Regional Planning Commission
Bob Schoenemann, Pawlet
Elisabeth Van Woert, SunCommon
Elizabeth Gibson, Pawlet

Eric called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Harry suggested adding the zoning administrator's report to the meeting agenda and then moved to approve the agenda as corrected. Paul seconded, and the agenda was unanimously approved.

Item 1: Annual Election of Officers

Chair of Planning Commission: Lenny nominated himself for Chair; Wayne nominated Eric for Chair. Paper ballots were taken, after which Fred said that it would be a good idea to rotate the position of Chair every few years. Eric was re-elected as Chair for another one-year term.

Vice Chair: Eric nominated Gary Baierlein, unanimously elected for a one-year term to replace Harry.

Secretary: Lenny nominated himself as Secretary, unanimously elected for another one-year term.

Item 2. Audience

Els Van Woert of SunCommon introduced her organization as a mission-driven, Vermont company promoting home-scale and community-scale solar installations. She is looking for willing hosts of community arrays in the right places. She said that no up-front cash from users is required, because of backing from banks and national lenders. Their projects are tied to the grid, so the solar payments are offset by the credits on the electric bill. But she said that the loan incentives expire in two years. Eric mentioned possible locations in industrial use areas, such as the West Pawlet slate quarries which are near three-phase power. Nancy Morlino brought up the

question of solar rooftop panels for the Mettawee School, but Els said that SunCommon has not really figured out this kind of application.

Concerns from the board included siting considerations (rooftop preferable to putting panels on land), whether the power from community arrays stays in Vermont, and the pace at which solar technology is developing.

Els said that she intended to follow up with the owners of the slate quarries to see about the possibility of siting arrays there.

Bob Schoenemann of Pawlet had reviewed the minutes from the March PPC meeting and had a few comments about the public forum, as he was unable to attend last month:

- Fiber optic is essential to attract new residents and very important for jobs.
- Affordable housing – West Pawlet has opportunities because of the wastewater treatment plant and also the housing stock there that could be refurbished.
- Water quality – water quality is a real issue but we have to be careful about imposing too many regulations on farmers because farms can't handle that kind of burden.
- Solar power – is very important to the future of Pawlet, especially when paired with electric vehicles.

Item 3. Flood Resilience Section of the Town Plan

Eric presented a sample flood resilience section compiled by Barbara Noyes-Pulling of the RRPC. It is a generic template that needs to be modified to reflect Pawlet's local considerations. Barbara said that the federal flood insurance maps have not changed since 2008 but that other things have, such as the definitions of floodplains, riparian buffers, etc. We need to add an explanation of the overlays and include more regarding mitigating risk to public safety and damage to infrastructure. This section also included an extensive list of recommended actions, without any recommendation as to how these actions could be accomplished, and who would undertake them. We should also include a discussion about the impact of Tropical Storm Irene on Pawlet, since that was the major flood event in Town in decades. Lenny said he would forward the digital version of this section to all PPC members.

Eric reported on the water quality meeting held the previous Wednesday (April 22) with Hilary Solomon of the Poultney Mettawee Conservation District, a consultant for the State Agency of Natural Resources, and various Pawlet representatives, and said that he had identified low cost loans available for repairing failed septic systems. This was the kickoff meeting for a water quality study (IDDE, illicit discharge detection and elimination) to be undertaken this summer in Pawlet.

Item 4. Transportation Section of the Town Plan

This section was not addressed because Gary Baierlein was unable to attend the meeting.

Item 5. Planning Survey Results

The additional planning survey results tallied since the last PPC meeting did not change the preliminary results reported last month. The significant additional material to report consisted of the categorized written responses and comments. Lenny went over those and will forward them to the other PPC members. A significant number of comments addressed the need to develop and revitalize the two village centers. These comments could be included as an Appendix to the revised Town Plan.

Item 6. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

The commission reviewed the minutes from the March 23, 2015 meeting. Harry made a motion to approve the minutes as written, Wayne seconded, passed.

Item 7. Zoning Administrator Report

Harry took over as Chair while Eric, as Zoning Administrator, reported that the Development Review Board is holding a public hearing on May 11 at 7 PM to review the Machs Market project. Eric is doing some of the brick work for his brother so is recusing himself from the discussion. The May 11 hearing will begin with a site visit at 7 PM, followed by a hearing at the Town Hall conference room to review the entire project.

Lenny, who is a DRB member alternate, explained that the DRB will entertain submissions from parties (abutters, who will be notified). Gib Mach needs DRB approval for the project because of the restaurant, which is new. Some state permits (septic, labor and industries, etc.) will also be necessary.

Item 8. Finalizing Subdivision Regulations

Eric said that we need to send a letter to Bill Burke of the District Commission (Act 250) officially notifying him that Pawlet has adopted subdivision regulations according to established procedures. Lenny will send the letter.

Item 9. Set Agenda for Next Meeting – May 25, 2015.

Approve agenda with any changes; approve minutes of April meeting; zoning administrator report; review of Town Plan as follows:

- Land use – Eric
- Transportation – Gary and Keith Mason
- Agriculture – Fred Stone and Philip Ackerman-Leist
- Energy – Elizabeth Gibson in Harry's absence
- Economic Development – Eric
- Flood Resilience – Wayne and possibly Keith Mason

Lenny will develop the overall outline for the document with input from Barbara Noyes-Pulling.

Lenny moved to adjourn at 9:20 p.m., Eric seconded, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Gibson, Acting Clerk